

Thriving youth need
thriving ecosystems.

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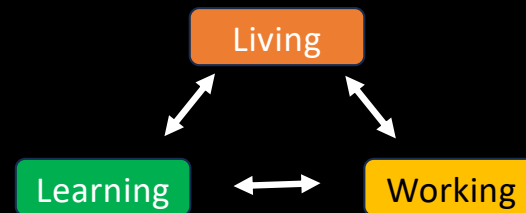


Ecosystem

A community of organisms and their physical environment

Approach 1: Apply ecological thinking to learning & development.

Approach 2: We need ecosystem thinking to redesign communities and education is a part of that. (Social ecosystem model – Spours, 2024)



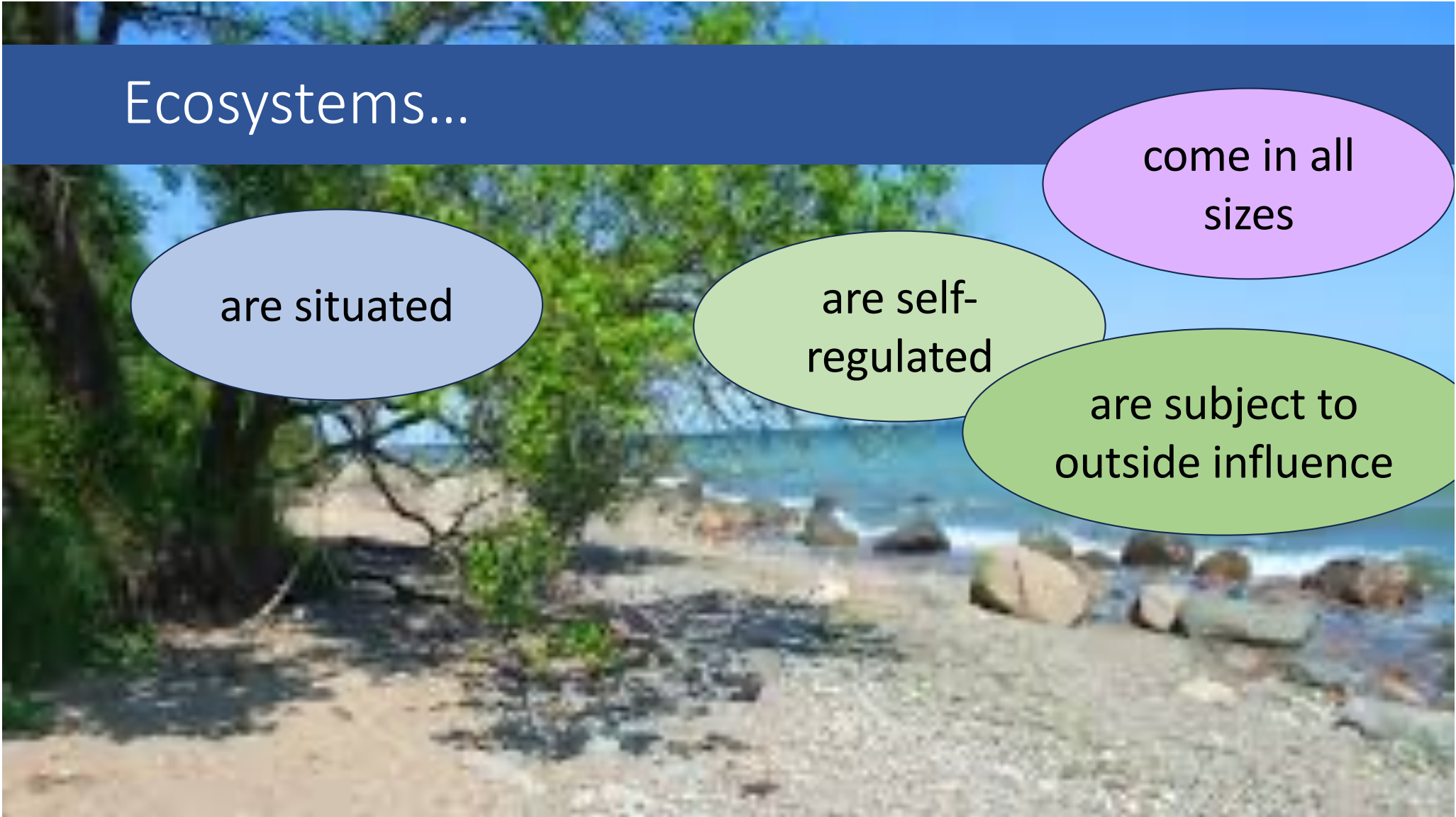
Ecosystems...

are situated

are self-
regulated

are subject to
outside influence

come in all
sizes



Ecosystems...

are situated

have **indicator & keystone** species

are self-regulated

Can be shaped with **adaptive management**

come in all sizes

are subject to outside influence

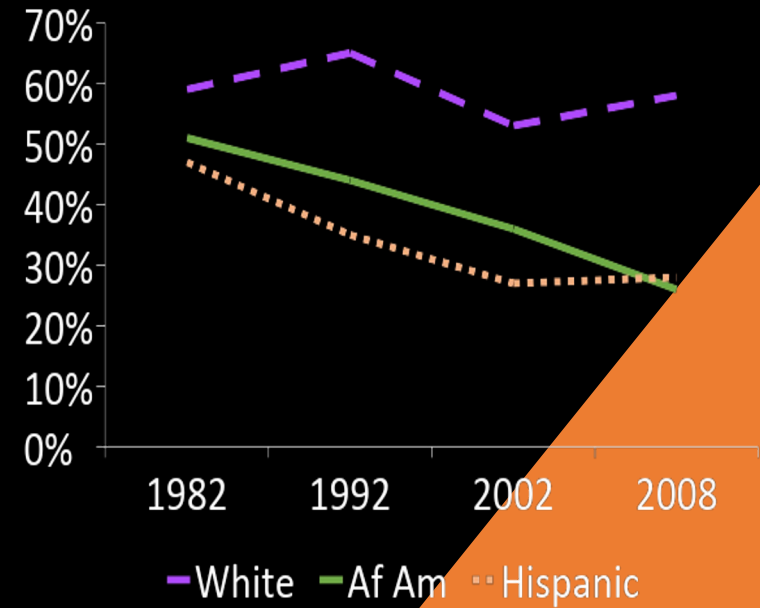
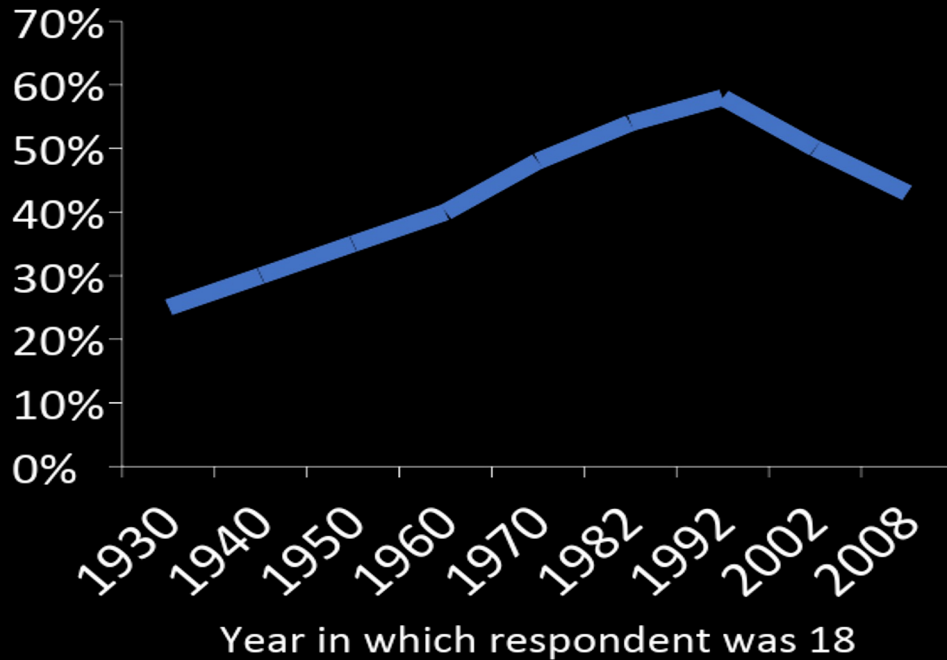
How do we better understand
and shape the ecosystem?

Example:
Youth Arts



Arts in schools:

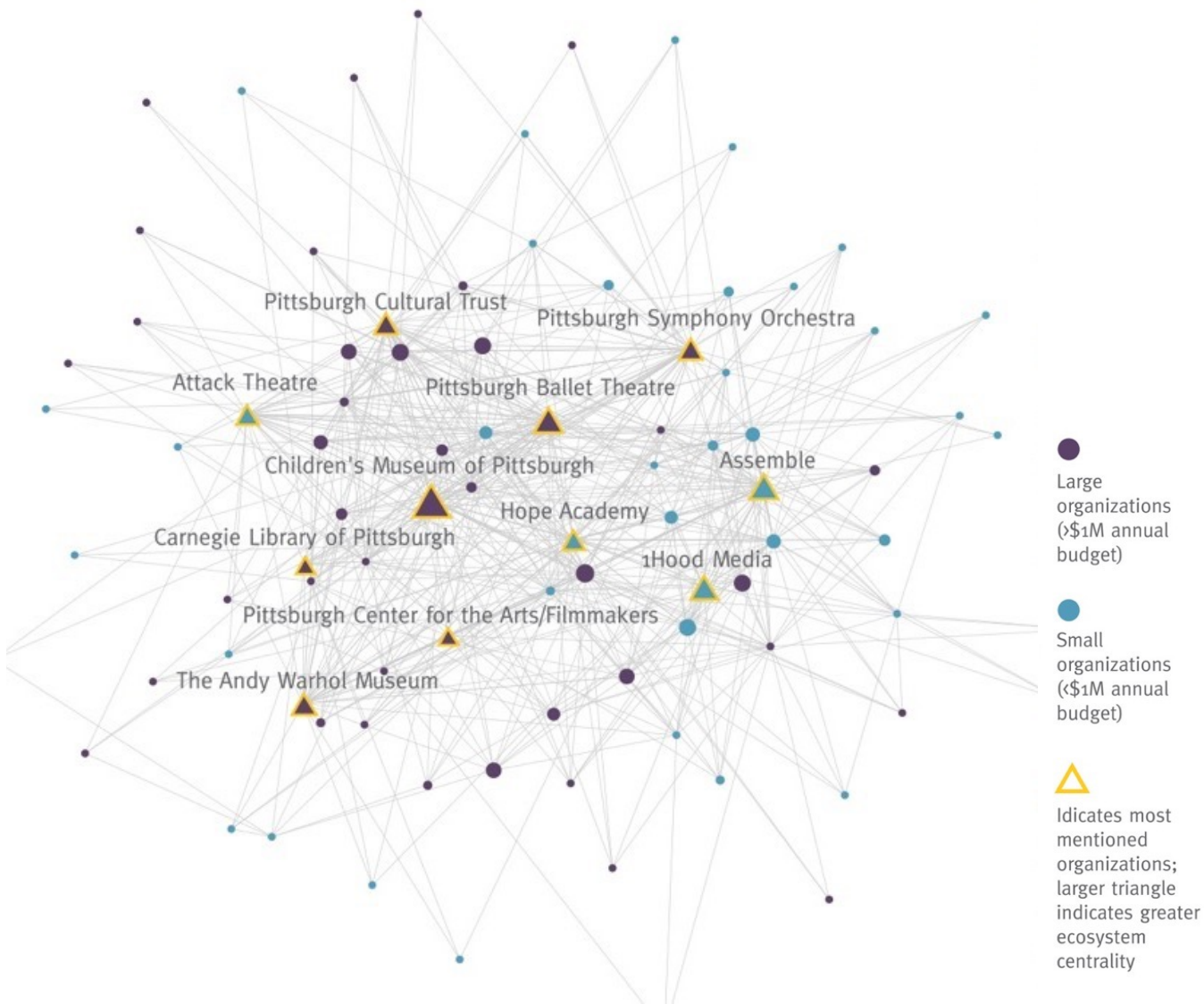
Declining, particularly for African American & Latine youth





Community- based arts programs & teaching artists

(the ecosystem re-balancing)



What does the Pgh youth arts ecosystem look like?

Over 250 creative learning organizations

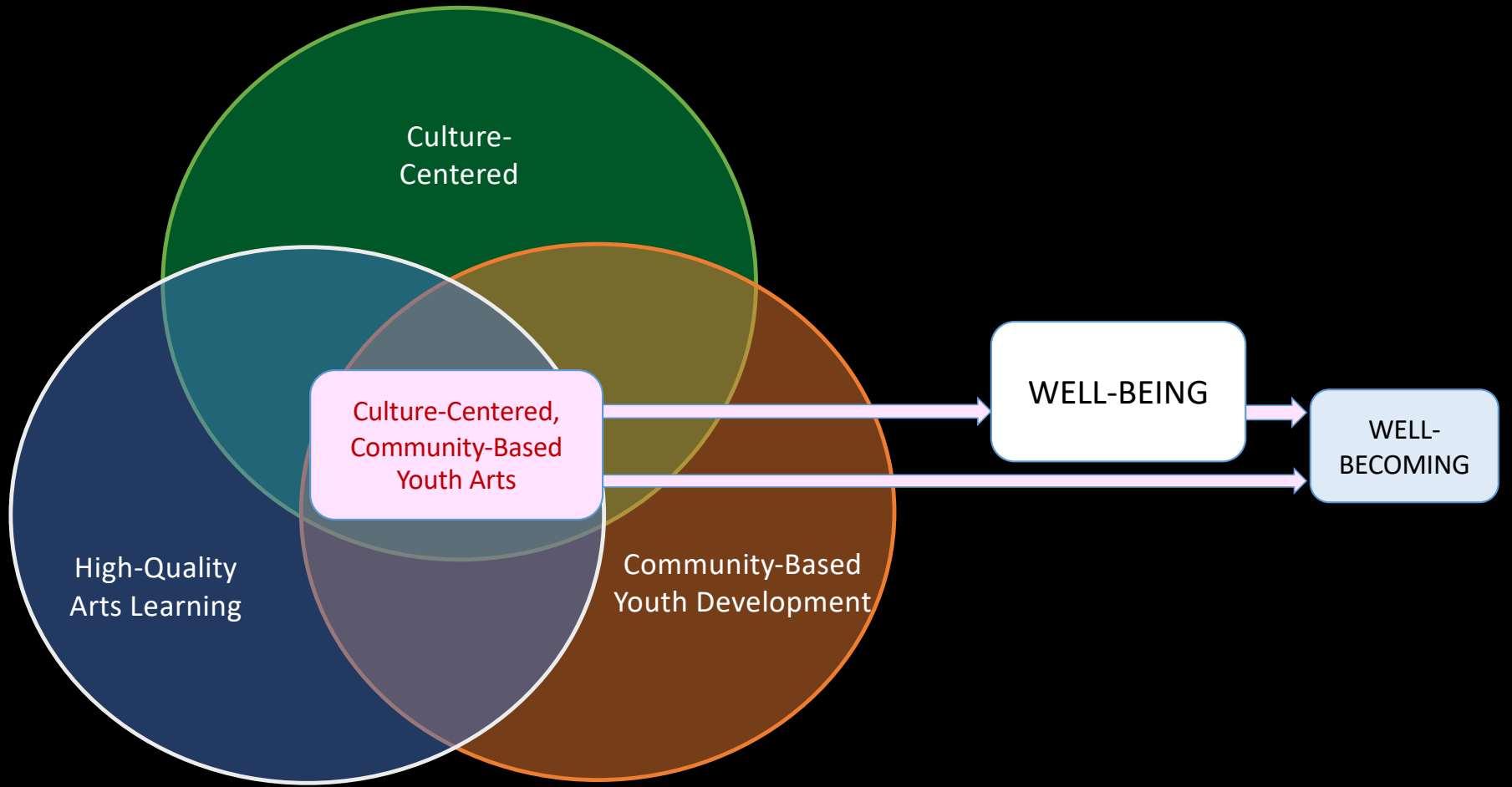
Size does not *determine* network centrality

4 subnetworks emerged –
1 had concentration of small, Black-arts centering organizations

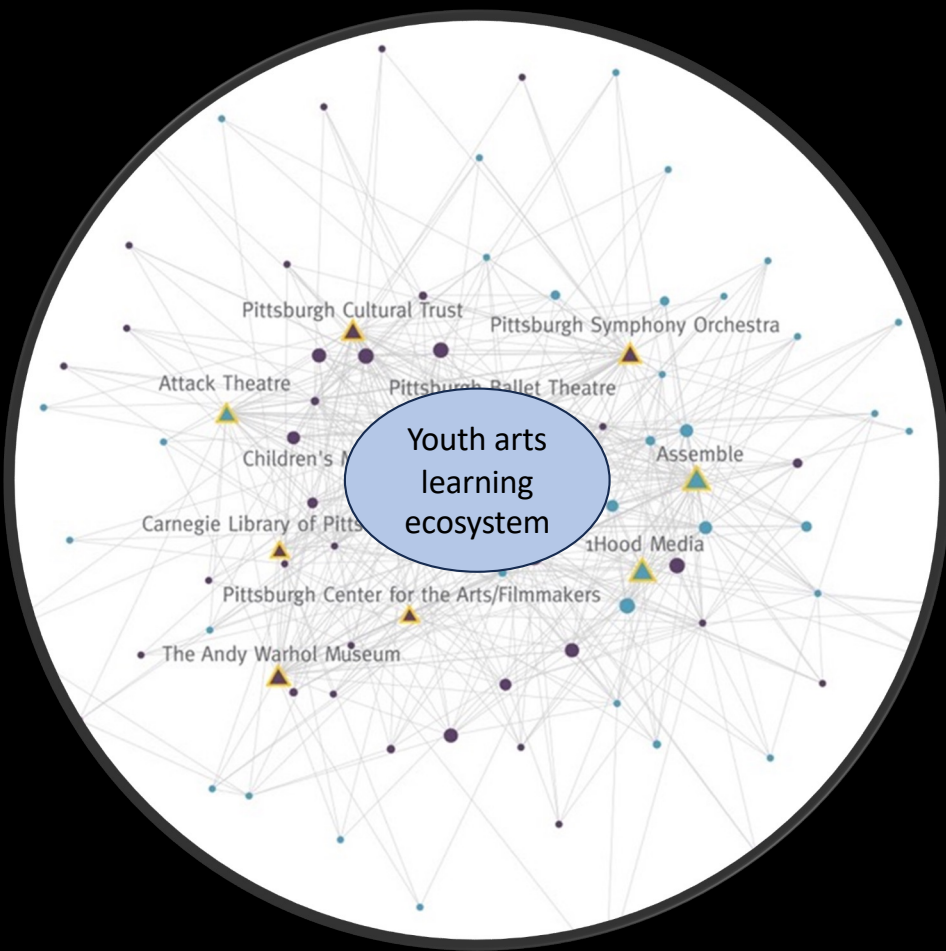
Culture-centered,
Community-based
Youth Arts

(CCYA)





How do ecosystems
shape CCYA?



Community & Program Leaders:

- A healthy CCYA ecosystem is diverse.
- Programs and communities are intertwined.

Social and cultural histories of communities and systems

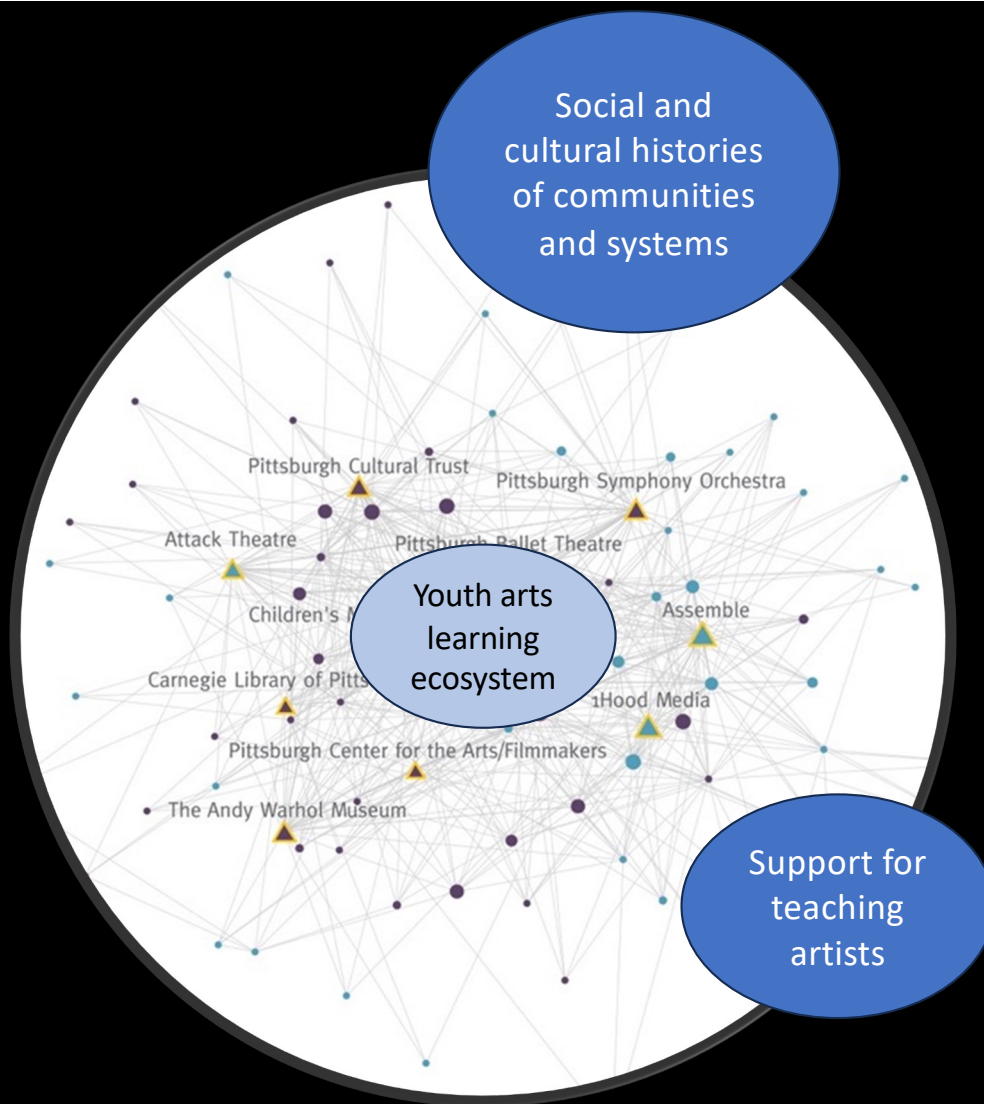
Community & Program Leaders:

- A healthy CCYA ecosystem is diverse.
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Larger forces:

- Social and cultural histories, including racism and marginalization, shape CCYA programs

Youth arts learning ecosystem



Social and cultural histories of communities and systems

Youth arts learning ecosystem

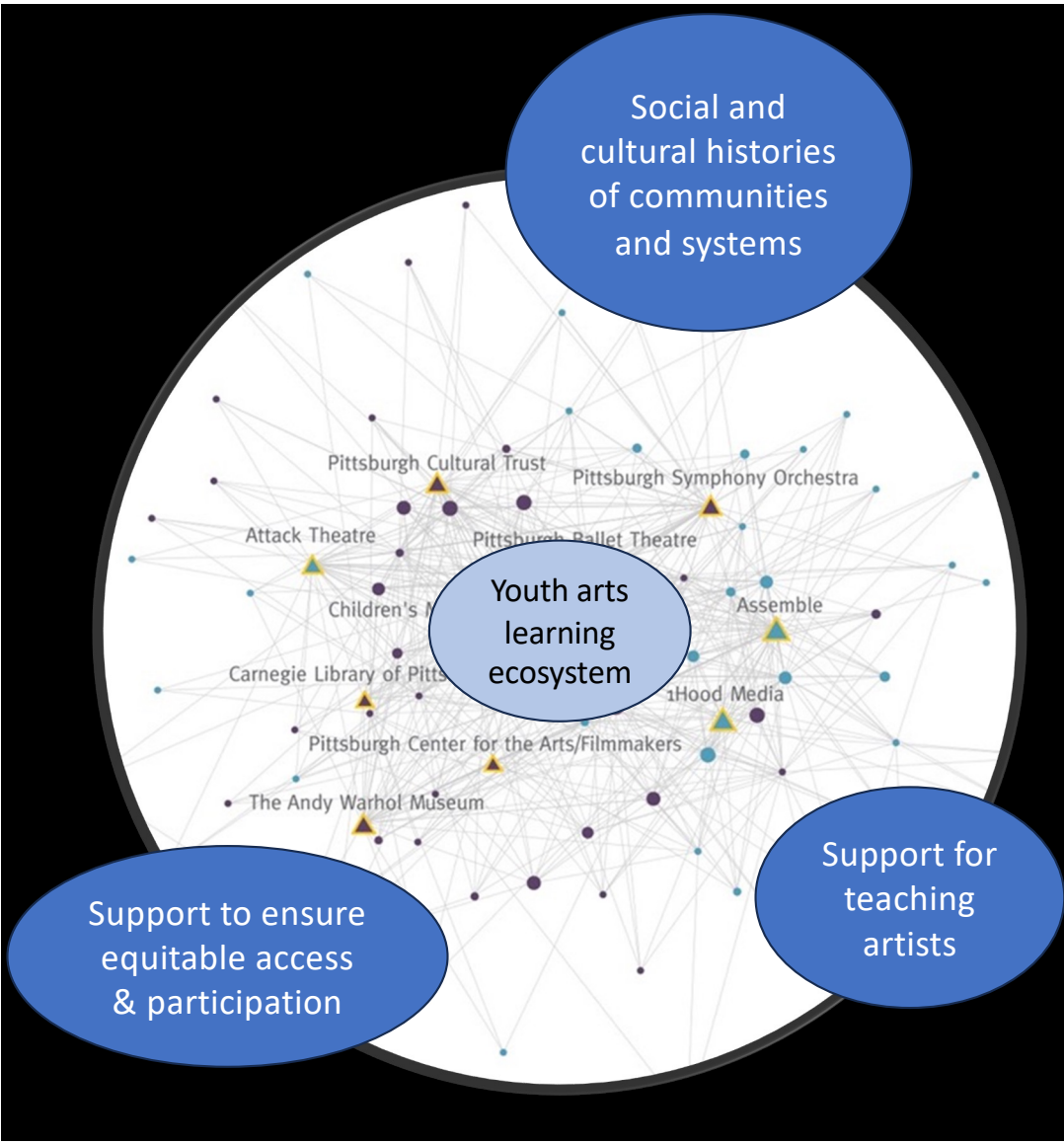
Support for teaching artists

Community & Program Leaders:

- A healthy CCYA ecosystem is diverse.
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Larger forces:

- Social and cultural histories, including racism and marginalization, shape CCYA programs
- Support for teaching artists varies across communities.



Social and cultural histories of communities and systems

Youth arts learning ecosystem

Support to ensure equitable access & participation

Support for teaching artists

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Larger forces:

- Social and cultural histories, including racism and marginalization, shape CCYA programs
- Support for teaching artists varies across communities.
- Communities vary in how they address program access.